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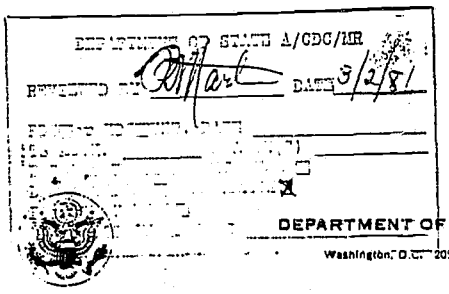

March 20, 1979

Mr. James H. Dyas
4 Holly Tree Court
Mt. Holly, New Jersey
08060

Dear Mr. Dyas:

I refer to your letter to Deputy Assistant Secretary John Bushnell, complaining about the decision to return the remains of the deceased members of the People's Temple to the United States. Mr. Bushnell asked me to respond to your letter.

I share your deep concern for the security of the United States. However, I am sure you understand that the decision made to return the dead Americans to the United States was made in the belief it did reflect the will of the majority of the American people. It has been a tradition of our government that it assist American citizens when necessary, regardless of their religious or political beliefs.

Naturally there was concern over expending funds in this situation because of its uniqueness, there being no statutory authorization. Thus a decision was made to return the bodies and then bill the People's Temple for the cost. This has been done by the Department of Justice in a civil suit in the U.S. District Court in San Francisco for 4.2 million dollars, the approximate amount the operation cost the government.

I appreciate your additional concern over recent events occurring abroad and urge you to continue to make your opinions known to the Department of State and other agencies of our government and your elected Congressional representative.

Please accept my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Richard A. McCoy
Office of Caribbean Affairs

ARA/CAR:RMcCoy:aag

Mr. James H. Ogan
4 Holly Tree Court
Mt. Holly, N.J.
08060

CAR
for reply

Deputy Asst Secretary
John Bushnell

Dear Mr Bushnell:

See the attached re the stupidity exercised in Guayana recently - when the hell is our Government going to reflect the will of the majority of our stable, taxpaying citizens & get guys in the State Dept pay more attention to getting criminals out of foreign jails (where they belong) than keeping

II

our Nation secure.d
after you Taiwan, Iran,
Ethiopia, afghanistan,
Panama, Angola already
gone from our side to the
Soviets and when do
you guys plan on giving
up Rhodesia and South
Africa?? How about Mexico?
why the hell don't
you bill "Rosie" Carter,
Fritz Mondale and all
the other crazies who
gave "Reverend" Jones
such glowing references.

and get him ports
guayana ——

no one in Washington
seems to know any
longer —— The first
responsibility of the Federal
government is the security
of the United States! We
fed up and extremely
concerned over the conduct
of our government

James A Byrd

Speaking Out

The tragic mass suicides in Guyana, in which more than 900 members of the controversial Peoples Temple died, has cost the American taxpayers between $2 million and $3 million. Spokesmen for various government agencies say that's the cost of transporting the bodies by air from the undeveloped South American country where the victims followed the Rev. Jim Jones and his curious philosophical mix of Christianity and Marxist socialism. We visited Merchantville's business district to find out how people feel about Uncle Sam paying the expenses.

ROBERT LENOIL, Pennsauken police officer: "It's a waste of taxpayers' money. The federal government should have buried them there. They should have put the bodies together and cremated them all. The whole thing is ridiculous."

PENNY OAKFORD, 21, of Merchantville: "It was a lot of money to spend for people who got themselves into that. I really don't think the government should have paid for it."

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VINCE PICCONE, Marchantville marchant: "I don't think the taxpayers should be liable for cult members. I think the money should be taken out of their (the cult's) assets. I don't feel the government should have spent the money."

ANDREA SEBAY, 22, of Camden, a student: "I meant of no sa. It was a tragedy. As far as the money is concerned, no I really don't agree. They were right, though, since they were Americans — but it's an awful lot of money."

FAM SHAFTO, 38, a Marchantville homemaker: "There's not much that can be done unless they put a law against their property. I suppose that's what I'm for."

LARRY PFAFFER, 28, Marchantville, a salesman: "The people went on their own free will. It might be a little cold-blooded but I don't feel it's our responsibility to take them home. From what I've read their families didn't even want them."